

NEW MASTERS IN SIBERIA PLAYING JAPAN'S GAME

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THE new masters of the Siberian Pacific coast are undoubtedly the Japanese, but the Mikado's military leaders who organized the Vladivostok "revolution" are keeping well in the background, so that I can say nothing about them. I can say a good deal, however, about the Russians who are acting as tools of the Japanese, for I spent over a year in Eastern Siberia as a military officer in the employ of the British Government. Consequently my knowledge of Generals Semenov, Boldyrev & Co. is greater, I think, than that of any newspaper correspondent who was in Siberia at the same time.

Boldyrev is an honest man and a sincere republican, who in 1918 was in the Uta Government and afterward in the Omsk Government, but some of Kolchak's supporters, thinking him too liberal, ejected him by a quite unjustifiable coup d'etat, which was quite as criminal as the Bolshevik coup d'etat a year earlier in Moscow. He is apparently having nothing to do, however, with the new Vladivostok Government, for he must see very clearly that it is dominated by the Japanese.

To describe Semenov properly I must make a long digression, else the readers of THE NEW YORK HERALD would think that I was telling fairy stories, for the career of this young man—he is only 26—is as marvellous, though not as pleasant, as a fairy tale.

The latest news about him to hand while I write is a telegram from the Far East saying that he has made his appearance off Vladivostok in a Japanese ship, with a large staff and a very large quantity of ammunition. The consuls are opposing his landing, and as he is not in the good books either of the English or the Americans it is possible that his employers, the Japanese, will send him back to Port Arthur. But it is fairly certain that he will turn up later and play a dominant part in the buffer state which the Japs have founded on the shores of the Pacific, so that I make no apology for saying a good deal about him.

Young Semenov's Career Is

Full of Ugly Adventure

Semenov is a figure that can hardly be paralleled in European history of any later date than the wars of the Spanish Succession. He is a "throwback" produced by the complete demoralization of Russia and by the abrupt retrogression of all Europe as a result of the great war. That retrogression has gone on to an extent which would have been considered quite impossible ten years ago. It has brought back the powerful German people to the stage in which they were warring with the Poles, and the Austrian people to the stage in which they were contending not with the French and the English but with the scattered Slavonic tribes on their frontier. Highwaymen are now the curse of several remote parts of Germany, as they were three hundred years ago, and some of the country houses have had moats built around them again and watchmen stationed on the walls in order to give warning of the approach of raiders. Isolated villages in the Prusso-Polish debatable land have had to fortify themselves like English villages on the Scottish border in the year 1500.

Even as I write this there comes news to me of the appearance of a robber band in one of the large forests which a new republic in this part of Europe is trying to sell to foreign capitalists. It is not in Estonia, and I am not going to say where it is, for these young states are extremely averse to the circulation of reports which might keep out foreign capital, but it would be a nasty jar for a well groomed gentleman from Wall Street, coming to eastern Europe to inspect some property, to be strung up to one of his own trees by a regular Robin Hood band of outlaws.

Warfare in South Russia

Sinks to Level of 300 Years Ago

In the same way the warfare in Siberia, South Russia, Poland, the Ukraine and the Caucasus sank during the last three years to the level of the warfare waged 300 years ago. The Ukrainian villages are all fortified and fighting against each other, the fighting being often for cattle and pigs instead of for high purposes of imperial policy, and being sometimes conducted (this, I admit, is an anachronism) with artillery and machine guns and armored motor cars abandoned by the wreck of the Czar's great army and worked by peasants who served as artillerymen, machine gunners and motor drivers in that innumerable host. The military leaders are very often private soldiers, whose staff work is as primitive as Tamerlane's.

Budenny, the Bolshevik cavalry leader, is a Caucasian Cossack who can neither read nor write, and the majority of the other leaders on both sides two years ago in South Russia and Siberia had never risen in the pre-war army above the rank of Captain, while very many of them had been only N. C. O.s, privates and officers' servants. Gen. Gaidai, the great Czech-Slovak leader in Siberia, had been only a stretcher bearer. Gen. Sirovi had been a lawyer's clerk. Gen. Sakharov, the commander in chief of all Kolchak's armies, had never been considered fit for more than a captaincy during the great war, and his handling of the Omsk retreat showed that he ought never to have been anything more.

Sometimes good men rose to the top, as always happens during revolutions, but as a rule it was the mud at the bottom that rose, owing to the complete demoralization of the armies, on the principle, I suppose, that a branny teamster with a voice like a foghorn is better fitted to control a mule outfit on corduroy forest tracks than an expert and gentle voiced motor driver, accus-

Semenov's Pretensions to Leadership in Vladivostok 'Revolution' Offer Poor Screen for Japanese Control of Siberian Pacific Coast, Since He Long Has Been a Paid Tool of the Mikado---Only 26, His Career Stands for All That's Evil in the Life of a Bandit and Murderer---Other Russian Figureheads Rate Little Above the Young Cossack Whose Mentor Is Son of Famous Japanese General Kuroki

Gen. Semenov, Cossack anti-Bolshevik leader, long reputed to be a paid tool of the Mikado and now regarded as a figurehead for the Japanese in the Far Eastern Republic of Siberia.



GEN. SEMENOV.

tomed to asphalt roads. Most of the fighting that has been done in Europe and Asia since the armistice would have amazed Gen. Pershing, for the armies were generally mobs, there was no staff work at all, commanders in chief did not know at critical moments where their flanks had gone to, artillery advanced without any covering infantry whatever, and every possible sort of mistake was committed—sometimes with the happiest results, the enemy being in an even worse muddle.

Battles became affairs of psychology rather than of strategy. Swift advances by small bodies of badly armed troops scared the life out of large bodies of better armed troops and led to the loss of thousands of square miles of territory. But it never led to any such loss of life as took place during the battles of the great war. Not more than a thousand people fell during the two great battles for Omsk in the autumn of 1919, and the Polish loss on the occasion of their great battle for Warsaw was ludicrous.

All this is preliminary to a short description of Ataman Semenov, who, according to a telegram received here yesterday from Berlin, has been appointed by the Japanese as head of the new "Russian" Government in Vladivostok. If this news is confirmed it means that Gen. Boldyrev, who is an honorable man, has refused to let himself be used any longer as a figurehead by the Japanese military leaders. But it will certainly arouse suspicion in England and America as to this Vladivostok Government's claim to describe itself as Russian. I would like, for instance, to have the opinion of Gen. Graves of the United States Army on Semenov, also that of Col. Slaughter, likewise of the United States Army, on the same subject. Both these officers have been in Siberia and know Semenov well. There are a number of American consuls to whom I could also appeal with confidence on this subject only that I am afraid that the rules of the consular service would prevent them from speaking for publication. There are also many American and British business men in Siberia who have very decided views about Semenov, but I am not sure that, with all the cables to Vladivostok in the hands of the Japanese, any one of them would like to speak out.

If the Washington Government were to publish a blue book giving all the despatches sent to the State Department and to the War Office about Semenov from the middle of 1918 to the present time, it would be one of the most sensational volumes ever issued by any government press. For these despatches would prove that Semenov is in the pay of the Japanese Government and that he is as bad a brigand as California ever saw in the forties of the last century. The publication of such a book would make impossible Semenov's retention of government in the Far East. The Japanese would have to find some

other figurehead, and perhaps they would leave the maritime province altogether.

Semenov, who is of mixed Russian and Mongol blood, served with the Verkhne-dinsk Cossacks—most of them Buriats—and rose to the rank of Captain during the great war. Neither his education nor his military talent permitted of his rising higher, and he would not have risen so high had it not been for the war, which accounted for very rapid promotion of regulars in all the belligerent countries. He saw a little service on the European front and then returned to the Far East, where he fell under the influence of old Gen. Khorvat, the head of the Chinese Eastern Railway and a strong reactionary. With financial help from Khorvat he formed in northern Manchuria a curious military outfit comprising Russian boys of 16 and 17, Chinamen, Koreans, Mongols and Japanese. This was 1918. This variegated gang could do nothing against the Bolsheviks, though the latter were very weak at this time, until the Japanese came along with their regular troops and cleared a way for Semenov as far as Chita. There Semenov reigned, under the protection of Japanese bayonets, till the fall of Kolchak. Without Japanese assistance he could not have held on for a day, for though he had some Russian officers and a good many Cossacks attached to him the entire civil population was against him. He is in the same position now at Vladivostok.

Semenov Regularly Subsidized

By the Japanese Government

The Japanese paid him then, as they pay him now, for the upkeep of his troops, and they give him besides a regular subsidy in money in return for which he has got to do exactly what they order him to do, exactly as if he were an officer in the Japanese army. In the middle of 1918 he was subsidized by the British Government, and when they dropped him he hired himself out to the Japs, whose paid servant he still is. Under these circumstances it is ridiculous to say that the "Government" which he controls at Vladivostok is a Russian Government: it is as much under the Mikado's thumb as the Government of Formosa, and Americans will stand a poor chance of getting any concessions out of it if those concessions conflict with Japanese interests.

Semenov, when at Chita, did not depend entirely on the Japanese, however, to balance his budget. He had other ways of making money. Holding as he did the frontier town of Manchuria, strongly garrisoned by Japanese troops, he insisted on collecting the customs there, though he had no right to do so. This proved a gold mine to him, for he could extort as much as he liked not only from merchants coming in but also from merchants going out, particularly from Chinese merchants whose Government is so paralyzed by fear of the Jap-

anese and their proteges that it is generally afraid of making any protest in such cases. On one or two occasions when wealthy Chinese merchants had been robbed and murdered by Semenov at the frontier it did protest vigorously, but nothing came of the protests. The Swedish Government also protested on account of the robbing of some Swedish merchants who were leaving Siberia with a large sum of money when they were plundered by Semenov's Cossacks and afterward found dead in a wood. Nothing came of this either.

The Mongol Leader Robs

By Means of Armored Motor Train

Dick Turpin had his trusty steed Brown Bess, but Semenov robbed in an up to date way by means of an armored train, in which he patrolled the railway line between Chita and the Manchurian border. A Scandinavian merchant who had accumulated a large sum of money during many years passed in Siberia and who had hidden that money while the Bolsheviks were in power in Siberia got it together after the Czech-Slovaks had cleared the Transsiberian in August, 1918, and reached Chita with it. Knowing that he could not get into China without Semenov's knowledge he took the bull by the horns, called on the Ataman and laid the case before him. It is presumed that he offered Semenov a portion of his fortune, for that chieftain treated him very hospitably and insisted on bringing him right to the frontier in the famous armored train. He was last seen being ceremoniously ushered into the train by Semenov, amid an armed guard of Cossacks, all saluting respectfully. He was never seen afterward, nor was his money. Next day Semenov returned alone to Chita, and he ever afterward discouraged any inquiries about that Scandinavian and his gold.

Sometimes Semenov went so far that his Japanese employers had to remonstrate gently with him. He stopped on one occasion an English officer in uniform and took money from him, but a vigorous complaint from the British commander led to an apology from him and a return of the loot. He had at least a dozen misunderstandings with the American troops, and on one occasion the Americans were on the point of opening fire on him. He made trouble with the gallant Czech-Slovaks every time they passed, and on one occasion Gen. Gaidai was compelled to send him a public ultimatum couched in the most violent language—the only sort of language which Semenov understood. In September, 1918, I travelled from Harbin to Katerinburg in Gaidai's train, along with Major Slaughter, the American military representative, and while passing through Semenov's territory we had to "stand to" all night, under arms, in view of information we had received to the effect that the Ataman contemplated an attack on us.

While passing through Semenov's territory Gen. Knox, the British commander in Siberia, was held up by Japanese troops, a soldier mounting guard over the engine driver while other soldiers examined the train. This naturally led to a vigorous protest on the part of the British General, but though the Japanese quibbled and explained they never really apologized. After Kolchak formed his Government at Omsk Semenov continually stopped ammunition, equipment and supplies for the Russian troops on the Ural front.—This elicited scores of the most violent complaints from the British and American Generals who were supporting Kolchak, but still the thing went on, and it probably had something to do in the end with the "Supreme Ruler's" downfall.

Associated With Kolchak

This Cossack Betrayed Him

Semenov never really acknowledged Kolchak, and Kolchak could never win the obedience of this Cossack bandit, who had behind him the might of Japan, the only country that really counted in Siberia, for it could send half a million men into the Maritime Province in the course of a month, a feat which neither America nor England could possibly do. If Japan had really wanted to crush the Bolsheviks it could have done so easily in 1918. If it had really wanted to assist the "Supreme Ruler" it could have seated him in the Kremlin in 1919. But, judging by its actions, it seemed to desire that Russia should remain weak and divided, and it seems to desire so still.

The Soviet Government is afraid that Japan will launch from Vladivostok a great attack not only on Red Siberia but even on Red Russia, but it need have no cause for fear. The Japanese want to keep the Russians fighting one another *ad infinitum*, and if any of the White Generals in its pay are too successful against the Bolsheviks it will get rid of them, for a strong Russia, whether White or Red, is the last thing in the world that the Mikado's Government desires. Its one idea is to make the Russian Pacific coast really Japanese, though nominally it may be Monarchist or S. R. or Menshevik.

But whatever it be Japan will rule the roost. Even in 1919, when there were American, British, French and Italian troops in Siberia, the Japanese soldiers and officers behaved as though they were cocks of the walk. Incidents illustrating the contempt with which they treated foreign officers could be cited by the score. On one occasion at Harbin four American officers had taken a compartment in a railway car by paying for it and getting a proper authorization from the railway au-

thorities to have it entirely to themselves. But after the train had started a Japanese Major who spoke English insisted, despite all protests, on forcing his way into it and taking the best seat. There was naturally a row, in the course of which the Major drew a revolver, but was knocked down and kept a prisoner till the end of the journey.

I introduce this question of the Japanese because it is intimately bound up with the question of Semenov, who is only a tool in the hands of the Japanese. If he rules in Vladivostok the Japanese will be masters of the port, and American business will be firmly but politely frozen out. To continue, however, my account of Semenov. In 1919 he had a most violent row with Kolchak, who denounced him for holding up ammunition and whom he in turn defied, greatly to the delight of the Japanese, to whom Kolchak was not sufficiently subservient. In July, 1919, the Japanese sent a military mission to Omsk in order to treat with the "Supreme Ruler," who refused to have anything to do with them, however, when it was explained to him that before any help was sent he must write a most servile letter to the Mikado, throwing himself metaphorically at that monarch's feet and imploring his assistance.

Later on in the year great pressure was brought to bear on Japan by England and France, with the result that Semenov and Kolchak became nominal friends. The former was given the rank of General—he had previously given himself the rank of Ataman—and invited to come to the Ural front with his Cossacks. He accepted the rank and still retains it, but he never moved from Chita, and when Kolchak fell he was unable or unwilling to assist him. He did, indeed, come as far as Irkutsk in his armored train, but, being extremely bad as a military leader, he had to retreat again and soon had to flee to Japan.

His short period of rule in Irkutsk showed him to be not only a bad soldier but an inefficient administrator. When the villagers complained he sent among them punitive expeditions, which robbed and burned like the Germans in Belgium.

Japan's Course Tends to Benefit Bolshevism

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JAPAN'S proceedings in Siberia will rather help Bolshevism in that country than otherwise, and may end in a war between Japan and America. The Japanese Government has now demanded from the Far Eastern republic the opening of three important points, Khabarovsk, Blagoveshchensk, and Chita—the latter being the seat of government. It also demands for its nationals concessions in mines, woods and steamship communication on the Amur, and insists that its subjects be compensated for all the loss they sustained in the civil war in Siberia. This simply means, of course, that the military party in Japan is in the saddle and is determined to keep Siberia in a state of disorder for its own purposes.

The Soviet Government has addressed a note to the French, English and Italian Governments complaining of the support which the Japanese are giving to White Guard leaders like Semenov and Ungern-Sternberg. The Soviet Government blames England for permitting this seizure of Vladivostok, which is, it says, a breach of the Anglo-Russian trade agreement, and it says it "reserves to itself the right to take the measures rendered necessary by this change of policy on the part of Great Britain."

The Japanese made all arrangements for the capture of Vladivostok from the Bolsheviks. They arrested the Red leaders, prevented the Red troops from concentrating and allowed the insurgents to seize the railway station and the arsenal. Vladivostok now is practically a Japanese port. At the same time the Japanese are busy in Mongolia, where they are raising a large Mongolian force for service in Siberia. Here, however, they are not hitting it off so well with the local White guerrillas, Ungern-Sternberg and Ataman Annenkov, a young Cossack of 25, extremely ferocious, drunken and dissipated. Annenkov, whose record as a butcher and a gunman would earn him the respectful admiration of the worst old time "bad man" of Texas, recently attacked the new Mongolian army, but then, fearing arrest by the Japanese, he took refuge at the headquarters of the Chinese expeditionary force in Mongolia.

Afterward he proceeded to Pekin in order to elaborate, with the assistance of the War Ministry there, plans for a campaign against Ungern-Sternberg, who on his side proclaimed a general mobilization without, however, getting a single recruit. On venturing northward again into Mongolia Annenkov was arrested by the Japanese and his hand dispersed. In Pekin there is now sitting a conference of the Mongolian "princes," who are drawing up, with the assistance of the Chinese Government, a plan of campaign for driving Ungern-Sternberg out of Mongolia.

When workmen complained he had them stripped, tied up and scourged. He murdered, robbed, burned and misgoverned like a medieval German Baron. The British officers who were attached to his "court" sent the strongest protests on this subject to their superiors, and the American officers did the same, but there was no improvement and most of the foreign officers left. This is the man whom the Japanese have had in their pay for the last three years and whom they mean to run as their candidate for the Presidency of the Far Eastern Republic. In my opinion Lenine is a much more respectable person.

Semenov is married, but having annexed a woman in a cafe of Kharbin, the worst sink of iniquity in the Far East, he has made her share his "throne."

Gen. Kappell, Deceased, Was a Man of Superior Sort

Gen. Kappell, also said by the telegrams to have been concerned in the Vladivostok revolution, was of a different type. A business man by profession and an Esthonian by nationality, he was till 1914 the representative of a German firm in Samara. At the beginning of the great war he entered the army as an ensign, but at the end of the war he was a Colonel of artillery. When the Czech-Slovaks took Samara, Kappell, who was living there at the time, collected 500 men round him and helped them to capture Simbirsk and Kazan, as well as 165,000,000 gold rubles which the Reds were carrying about in railway trucks.

In November, 1918, he was in Ufa, having now attained the rank of General, and in 1919 he was again at Ufa forming a new division. I saw him near Ufa in May, 1919, and thought him one of the best of the Russian Generals—businesslike, unwearied, careful of his men.

When the Red wave swept over the Urals in June, 1919, he was swept before it, but during the terrible winter retreat from Omsk which followed he showed great bravery and resource. When Kolchak was captured near Irkutsk, Kappell, seeing that nothing could be done but to save as many of his sadly diminished force as possible, crossed Lake Baikal on the ice, taking forty-eight hours to do it and getting his feet frozen. His soldiers succeeded in carrying him to a Czech-Slovak Red Cross train on the other side of the lake, but several days afterward the unfortunate General died. His name is mentioned as that of one of the leaders that recently took Vladivostok, but the mistake is probably due to the fact that his troops, though they had dwindled to a small band, still retain the name of their beloved leader.

In other words, the white race, as represented by various Russian Cossack chiefs, who are really bandits and adventurers, occupies about the lowest rung on the ladder in Mongolia and eastern Siberia. The Japanese and Chinese are using them against the other. Dressed in skins and rags and seldom sober, for the Japs keep them well supplied with firewater, their wild followers are rapidly degenerating to the condition of savages, and the well dressed, well equipped Japanese leaders regard them with contempt.

That the Japanese will keep them in that condition as long as possible may be regarded as certain. But the result of it all will be that most of the Russian peasants will be driven to side with the Bolsheviks, and that the whole of eastern Siberia will fall into Japanese hands. The Japanese will make the most of the present disturbed state of Europe, with Germany crushed, France nearly bankrupt and England handicapped by conditions in Ireland, Egypt and India.

The Japs are behaving, however, with great diplomatic skill and it will be difficult for any western Power to take exception to their proceedings. They can always blame the Chita Republic for neglecting to fulfil its engagements, especially with regard to the indemnification of Japanese subjects, whose losses are fixed so high that the impecunious Russians can never pay it.

Cossack Leader Pictured as Grovelling Before the Mikado

Moreover, the colossal mining and forest concessions, which the Japanese are demanding and which nobody can prevent them from taking, will give the Mikado a stranglehold on the Far Eastern republic. Worst of all, Japan is working through Russian agents, whom she has bought body and soul. One of these is Gen. Semenov, who is only a figurehead in the hands of Capt. Kuroki, the clever son of Field Marshal Kuroki, the conqueror at the battle of the Yalu. Semenov is a very ignorant young Cossack and almost a savage, but his proclamations are written for him and his military plans drawn up by Kuroki, who speaks Russian well and is always at his elbow. Semenov is occasionally sent by his master to Tokio in order to grovel before the Mikado, who, though now, as is well known, sunk into a lethargic and half-witted condition, is generally pleased at seeing a white man grovelling before him in a posture of abject abasement.

Another big Russian figure in the Far East is Gen. Khorvat, a large, easy, affable man, with a long gray beard, who is at the head of the Chinese Eastern Railway and who made his headquarters in Harbin, which, being leased by Russia from China, was until the other day neither Chinese nor

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